

THE HONORABLE VANESSA RUIZ
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS

Judge Vanessa Ruiz was appointed to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in 1994 by President William Jefferson Clinton.

Judge Ruiz was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She graduated from Wellesley College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and received her law degree from Georgetown University Law Center in 1975.

Following law school, Judge Ruiz was in private practice, beginning her career at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson in Washington, D.C., where she worked on international commercial and intellectual property transactions and arbitration. She then became Senior Counsel to Sears World Trade, Inc. Judge Ruiz was a founding member of Sloan, Lehner & Ruiz, a firm specializing in litigation and international matters, which later merged into the firm of Pepper, Hamilton & Scheetz, where she became partner. In 1991, Judge Ruiz entered the Office of Corporation Counsel for the District of Columbia (now Office of the Attorney General) as Deputy for the Legal Counsel Division. She became Principal Deputy in 1993, and Corporation Counsel in 1994.

At the court, Judge Ruiz chairs the Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct and is a member of the Access to Justice Commission. Judge Ruiz participates in a number of local, national and international legal organizations. She serves as the current president of the National Association of Women Judges and is on the Board of Managerial Trustees of the International Association of Women Judges. Judge Ruiz has served on the Executive Committee of the Council for Court Excellence and the D.C. Bar's Pro Bono Programs Committee. As a member of the National Hispanic Bar Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of D.C., Judge Ruiz mentors Latino law students, speaks to law students about judicial clerkships, and participates in programs designed to educate the Hispanic community about the judicial system. In 2001, Judge Ruiz was named Hispanic National Bar Association Judge of the Year for her commitment to serving the Hispanic community. Judge Ruiz speaks on issues of judicial independence and judicial engagement with the community, participating in conferences in the US and Latin America. She is a member of the American Law Institute.

Judge Ruiz has taught as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center and is co-author of *Europe Without Frontiers: A Lawyers' Guide* (BNA 1989).

Judge Ruiz is married to David E. Birenbaum, a retired partner of Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson and former US Ambassador to the UN for Management and Reform. They have two children and two stepchildren.